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SUBJECT: GREEK RESPONSE TO GYMNICH DEMARCHE

REF: SECSTATE 123576

Classified By: A/POLCOUNS PAUL CARTER. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (SBU) On September 4, A/PolCouns delivered reftel non-paper on U.S. positions on issues to be considered at the September 7-8 EU informal foreign ministers meeting (Gymnich) to MFA European Correspondent Penny Douthett. Her following responses are keyed to the major issues raised in the non-paper:

-- Kosovo: Greece's position remained essentially unchanged from previous GAERC meetings. Greece believed every effort should be made to encourage success in the current negotiations and desired a solution that was acceptable to both parties. Greece also believed any solution must be endorsed by the UNSC. All parties had to avoid unilateral actions that could inflame the situation.

-- Russia: Greece agreed generally with the U.S. position on supporting democracy in Russia. At the same time, the EU and Russia had a close, symbiotic relationship, particularly on economic matters. Russia was a strategic partner for the EU and had to be dealt with accordingly. Douthett believed that questions at the Gymnich about the EU's relations with Russia would be considered in general terms and would not focus on such specifics as CFE, WTO, etc.

-- India, China: As in the case of Russia, Douthett believed questions about EU relations with these countries would be addressed at the Gymnich in general, not specific, terms.

-- Georgia: Greece agreed on the importance of encouraging dialogue between Georgia and Russia.

-- Iran: Douthett believed Iran would not be on the Gymnich agenda.

-- Middle East: Greece believed the EU must remain an active player in the Middle East. Greece supported Abbas and Fayyad and wanted the peace process to move forward. At the same time, Greece did not like to see the Palestinians disunited. Greece wanted all to go smoothly before the conference in November. On Lebanon, Greece believed all efforts must be made to avoid civil war.

12. (C) UK and EU-Africa Summit: Douthett said that, in addition to the other agenda items, the UK wished the Gymnich meeting to discuss the UK's participation in the EU-Africa summit scheduled for December. The Brown government was under great domestic pressure not to allow Zimbabwe's Mugabe a platform

of legitimacy at the summit and had delayed the meeting until a solution could be found. Douthett said the EU had agreed on certain "organizational tricks" that would restrict Mugabe's participation and would not allow him to take advantage of the summit for his own purposes.

COUNTRYMAN